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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives
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Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives

Review reports and proposals for further action and initiatives submitted by organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other concerned organizations

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Contributions from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund**

1. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives, in paragraph 17 of the annex to decision 1,[1] invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in collaboration with other relevant agencies, building on progress made since the World Conference on Education for All, held at Jomtien, Thailand, from 5 to 9 March 1990, to submit a report on progress made towards achieving the goals of education for all as agreed in the Copenhagen Programme of Action, including the goal of closing the gender gap in education, through existing initiatives, and to make

* A/AC.253/12.
** The reports are being issued herewith as received in the language of submission only.
[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 45* (A/54/45 and corrigendum), chap. VI, sect. B.

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recommendations on further action. The Preparatory Committee requested that the report also be made available to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-eighth session.

2. The Secretary-General accordingly circulates herewith, for the information of the Preparatory Committee and the Commission, the report of UNESCO entitled "Education for all since Jomtien" (see annex I).

3. The Secretary-General also draws the attention of delegations to the report of the United Nations Children's Fund entitled "What is needed to reach the education goals of 2015: the perspective of UNICEF" (see annex II).

Annex I

Education for all since Jomtien

In March 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, some 1,500 participants met in order to address the critical importance of providing basic education for all. It was recognized that, following a slowing down of school enrollment in several regions through out the eighties, mobilization of new partnerships and support for basic education was urgently needed. A declaration and framework for action was agreed upon which encouraged action at global, regional and national levels. Each government was asked to set up their goals and objectives based upon the Jomtien Declaration and Framework for Action. It was agreed that the crucial part of education is not mere school attendance but rather learning. In this connection it was recognized that school enrollment frequently would give a false impression of the efficiency of a given education system where learning achievement often is dismally low. The quality of education was thus presented as ultimately more important than mere access to schooling.

The World Declaration on Education for All underlined the importance of "Meeting basic learning needs" for all and set forward an expanded vision and a renewed commitment. This expanded vision would encompasses:

- Universalizing access and promoting equity
- Focusing on learning
- Broadening the means and scope of basic education
- Strengthening partnerships

The Framework for Action encouraged countries to "set their own targets for the 1990s" around the following six dimensions:

1. Expansion of early childhood care and development
2. Universal access to and completion of primary education by the year 2000
3. Improvement of learning achievement
4. Reduction of adult illiteracy rate
5. Expansion of basic education and training in essential skills required by youth and adults

6. Increased acquisition by individuals and families of the knowledge, skills and values required for better living and for sustainable development through all educational channels.

Many countries responded by setting up national EFA teams which developed national action plans that would seek to realize the Jomtien agenda. These action plans aimed at evaluating their own education systems, formulating policies for improving their education systems, strengthening management capacity of people and institutions, creating a more supportive environment for policy making, broadening partnerships, diversifying resource bases and exploring ways of improving delivery of basic education.

At central level, the EFA Forum was officially constituted at the initiative of the five conveners: UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank with the following objectives:

- To monitor progress by countries and organizations towards Education for All
- To ensure that basic education remains on the world's development agenda (Advocacy and information)
- To promote dialogue and co-operation among Education for All partners

UNESCO, whose mandate puts top priority on education, offered to host the EFA Forum Secretariat which was consequently established in Paris at UNESCO Hqs in order to execute the programme approved by the EFA Forum Steering Committee. This Steering Committee has a very broad representation of all major partners at international level involved in different ways in supporting and developing education for all worldwide. The members include, in addition to the above mentioned conveners, UNDESA, WHO as well as other international government bodies, all major bi-lateral donors, a broad representation of leading NGOs as well as regional representation.

The commitment and resolve arising from the Jomtien Conference were reinforced in the recommendations made by all subsequent UN conferences of the 1990s, particularly the United Nations conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 1992, the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994, The World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 1995 and the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995. The importance of basic education for sustainable human development was forcefully reiterated in the reports of the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first century, 1996 and the Hamburg Declaration adopted in July 1997 by the fifth International Conference on Adult Education, CONFINTEA V. Member States and non-governmental organizations were urged to promote the right to education for all and to create conditions for all to learning throughout life. In 1996, a mid-Decade Review was held in Amman at which some 70 countries presented their national reports towards education for all goals. The main conclusion drawn from this mid-decade evaluation in Amman was that "There has been significant progress in basic education, not in all countries nor as much as had been hoped, but progress that is nonetheless real".

In1997, General Assembly Resolution 52/84 requested Secretary-General in co-operation with the Director-General of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and in consultation with Member States, to consider effective ways and means for achieving the goal of education for all, including the desirability and feasibility of launching a United Nations decade to eradicate illiteracy. This resolution is one of the principal directives which lend authority to the EFA 2000 Assessment exercise, launched under the auspices of the EFA Forum in 1997, following a joint decision by the Heads of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Bank. (The adopted resolution of the 54th General Assembly has further strengthened this commitment). An intensive effort has been made by the Jomtien partner agencies to ensure that the EFA 2000 Assessment would mobilize all Member States and constitute not only a review of progress but also a renewal of goal-setting for the first decade of the twenty-first century. Much greater emphasis is now being placed on the presentation of disaggregated data (by gender, administrative level etc.) that will facilitate in-country and regional educational planning processes. Case studies on literacy and non-formal education, thematic studies, and special surveys on learning achievement and conditions of teaching/learning also form an integral part of the Assessment process.

Within the context of the many international conferences of the 1990s, the message includes the conviction that education is the cornerstone of social development, of achieving quality of life for individuals, economic prosperity, social cohesiveness in a diverse society, values of peace and tolerance. It is related to key social issues such as poverty alleviation, equity (note particularly gender), population matters, health, nutrition and environment. Consequently, EFA Assessment 2000, as well as reviewing progress, has a focus on planning future policy initiatives: the progress and the challenges seen in early childhood education, primary education, learning achievement, literacy, essential skills and better living.

The EFA 2000 Assessment is very much concerned with improving the processes of consultation and participation in preparation of the report and planning the policies of education in the 21st century. Because of this, considerable emphasis has been placed on ownership of the report and its data by the Government concerned.

In July 1998, the Director-General of UNESCO wrote, on behalf of the Forum's Conveners, to invite all countries to participate in the Assessment and urged them to establish a broad-based national assessment group with a coordinator and a technical sub-group as recommended in the *General Guidelines* provided by the EFA Forum Secretariat. At the international level, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) with members from the five Jomtien conveners was established which compiled *Technical Guidelines*, with a list of 18 core EFA Indicators and other more qualitative means of reviewing EFA progress. It also established an implementation mechanism that foresaw individual Country Reports as the cornerstone of the Assessment process, leading through to regional syntheses of progress and future goal setting.
In addition to regular EFA country reports, the EFA Forum secretariat has launched some 30 special surveys on quality of primary education as well as pupils' learning achievement, and has

commissioned 14 global thematic studies on such topiçs as girls' education, education for refugees, basic education and literacy for adults, or the population factor in EFA, inter alia. There is clearly a huge demand, in the information age of the 21st century, for international agencies to assist countries, particularly their education communities, to improve their level of ease concerning collecting, processing or interpreting quantitative data. The EFA Forum secretariat has had to stress that one indicator needs to be interpreted in relation to others, rather than each in isolated, standalone fashion.

Altogether, these assessment activities undertaken in nearly all of UN member states will provide a basis for understanding and improving basic education that is likely to be more thorough and comprehensive than anything available until now. More than 180 countries have officially taken part in the EFA 2000 Assessment. 10 Regional Technical Advisory Groups have been set up in order to help mobilizing countries falling within these regions to carry out the evaluation in question, provide technical support as well as raise additional funds at regional levels. These RTAGs are also responsible for planning and organizing Regional EFA Meetings. Most of the donor community have rightly insisted that the EFA Assessment 2000 should focus on regional concerns while not denying the need for a global synthesis.

Six Regional EFA Meetings will take place around the world from December 1999 to February 2000, to review regional synthesis reports and decide on future action.
The dates for these meetings are as follows:

- **6-10 December 1999**, The Sub-Saharan African conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, organized back-to-back with the biennial ADEA conference
- **17-20 January 2000**, Regional EFA meeting for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
- **24-27 January 2000**, Regional EFA meeting for the Arab States and North Africa, Cairo, Egypt
- **2-4 February 2000**, Ministerial review meeting of the nine high-population countries, Recife, Brazil
- **6-8 February 2000** , Regional EFA meeting for Europe and North America, Warsaw, Poland
- **10-12 February 2000**; Regional EFA meeting for the Americas, Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic

While the EFA Forum's international Steering committee has decided that the Jomtien World Declaration is still valid and should be maintained, it has appointed a drafting group to re-examine the Framework for Action This new document, to be reviewed by Member States at the up-coming regional conferences, will be adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar, April 2000. It will also be submitted to the UN General Assembly in the year 2000, and will feed into the many global policy fora which will discuss the role of education in the context of sustainable development

The Steering Committee, the Secretariat, the RTAGs, and indeed the countries, see the EFA Assessment as a process, that could and should continue well into the next millennium, seeking to improve the scope and particularly the quality of basic education for all and increasingly linking reliable educational data with more informed policy formulation and decision making.

The World education Forum in Dakar (April 2000) will be the culmination point of the EFA 2000 Assessment. The World Education Forum will receive a global synthesis report based on the results of the EFA 2000 Assessment, together with the findings and recommendations of the previously held regional EFA meetings. Based on an examination of these documents, the Forum will adopt a Global Framework for Action which will be an Agenda for Education in the 21st Century. This Agenda, the immediate outcome of the World Education Forum, will be disseminated very widely in different languages, and communicated to the several UN development conferences scheduled later in the year 2000.

It seems clear that the EFA 2000 Assessment has been very successful in mobilizing large numbers of countries and EFA partners working together in producing what is probably the largest evaluation ever undertaken in this domain. The data now being processed is of higher quality and relevance than ever before and will be an extremely useful instrument for better planning of further plans, strategies and policies to realize the goal of providing Education For All.

A draft Executive Summary of a Global (Dakar) Framework for Action is attached as well as the draft version of the African (Johannesb declaration and framework for action recently endorsed in principle at the above mentioned regional EFA meeting in Johannesburg, 6-10 December 1999. These two documents will be further revised prior to Dakar. The Global framework will take into account the additional 5 regional frameworks which will be presented at the corresponding regional EFA meetings referred to above. These action plans, eventually endorsed by the EFA Forum, will present objectives and targets for reaching the goal of Education for All by 2015.

Draft Dakar Framework for Action

Executive Summary

Introduction

Learning is the "treasure within." The capacity to learn is the foundation of human development, enlightened existence and the maintaining of livelihoods. Nations have recognized basic education as both a fundamental right in itself and as a key to equipping individuals and entire societies to respect and foster other human rights.

We are now at the close of a decade in which social aspects of development have emerged alongside economic considerations as core elements of national policy. It is now recognized that all persons must have access to a constellation of basic social services if development is to be equitable, peaceable and durable. Education in particular is now seen as pivotal to addressing deepening poverty, sustaining socio-economic progress, and honoring the rights of every person. As the bedrock of all sustainable human development, effective basic education must be broadly supported by adequate and well-managed resources.

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand, drew world attention to the critical importance of basic education. It highlighted the learning needs of neglected minorities, including girls and women, and emphasized the importance not only of access to schooling but of quality learning. 155 countries endorsed the World Declaration on Education for All and the associated Framework for Action. While it set only illustrative targets, the Declaration explicitly committed all participants to "act cooperatively through [their] own spheres of responsibility, taking all necessary steps to achieve the goals of education for all."

Progress since Jomtien

Six years after Jomtien, in 1996, participating nations reconvened in Amman, Jordan for a mid-decade progress review, and significant achievements were documented. More than 100 countries had developed explicit EFA goals and strategies, and it was clear that the Jomtien goals and principles enjoyed continuing widespread support. An estimated 50 million more children were enrolled in primary school than in 1990, and even in the face of sizeable population increases the numbers of out-of-school children were declining.

Nevertheless, it was crystal clear that millions of persons remain untouched by the optimism of Jomtien and that much of its promise remains unfulfilled. Education may stand high on rhetorical agendas of governments, but all too many commitments remain unmet. Early childhood care programs in developing countries are too few in number,

and in all too many countries poorly qualified teachers are still laboring for low pay amid deteriorated infrastructures. Entire sub-regions in the developing world, most notably Sub-Saharan Africa, are severely constrained by lack of education. Some 100 million children aged 6 to 11 remain out of school, and a further 150 million, including adolescents, have dropped out without acquiring basic levels of literacy. This is not just a developing country issue. One in five adults in industrialized countries cannot read or write a simple text.

Gender disparities persist. Although great strides have been made, nearly two-thirds of children who are denied their right to an education are female. Girls' education has been extensively documented as the investment that offers the largest overall returns for economic development, yet national policies do not reflect this insight. The Amman meeting redefined girls' education as the priority among priorities.

Endemic poverty and gravely unequal distribution of wealth across all regions are among the uneasy legacies we and our children inherit as we cross the threshold from one century to the next. As people are drawn inexorably to metropolitan centers, rural-urban gaps widen. Information technologies threaten to divide societies into those who use them and those who for various reasons do not. Preventable health problems adversely affect school attendance and learning. Massive debt repayment requirements in some parts of the world ensure that more is spent on meeting debt obligations than on primary education.

The World Education Forum in Dakar

During the decade since Jomtien a succession of global conferences and reports on social development have affirmed the eradication of poverty as the necessary condition for development and the importance of education as a primary means toward this end. The Social Summit in Copenhagen placed education squarely in the center of anti-poverty strategies. The Children's Summit, Rio, Beijing, Salamanca, Cairo and Hamburg echoed these themes.

The stage is now set for the countries of the world, individually and collectively, to adopt a stronger, more action-oriented approach to the goal of universal basic education. This is the purpose of the World Education Forum at Dakar, Senegal in 2000.

Discussions at Dakar will reflect the circumstances and imperatives of the new millenium. The forces of globalization, market liberalization, freer movements of human and capital resources across national boundaries, and the pervasive influence of microelectronics are transforming not only how people learn but the nature of what they learn and how they use it. As skills requirements rise for livelihood-sustaining employment, basic learning becomes ever more essential for work as well as for successful graduation into secondary and higher levels of education.

This turbulence and unpredictability surrounding our lives give daily new meaning to the imperatives in the Jomtien commitments. The gulf is widening between those who have access to information and communications technologies – for e-mail, e-commerce and e-learning – and those who do not. Trends towards privatizing education and the associated withdrawal of the state are raising the stakes for families and children living in poverty. Closing the education gap is a first step towards closing the income gap.

Extraordinary opportunities are available today that were not present a decade ago. Global consensus has been forged around the criticality of education to more sustainable human development, and the advantages to societies of educating girls and women are now widely acknowledged. New synergies are beginning to develop around more comprehensive school governance systems and the need to engage a broad set of actors in educational planning and practice. The promises of technology, while yet ambiguous and undefined, offer enormous potential to enhance educational outreach, accessibility, self-paced learning, and meticulous assessment of the individual learning process.

Thus the continuing relevance of the Jomtien Declaration is clear. The world community understands that education for all is pivotal in addressing deepening poverty, sustaining socio-economic progress and honoring the rights of every person. Lacking are the necessary resources and political will to meet commitments already made at Jomtien.

Education for All 2000 Assessment

In preparation for the Dakar Forum, each country has been invited to re-examine its own situation in regard to the basic learning needs of all its people. By means of the Education for All 2000 Assessment, countries are being asked to spell out what has been learned, identify successes and shortfalls, and suggest the most promising directions for the future that can be pursued with the help of the international community.

National teams have implemented these efforts at country level, assisted by subregional technical advisory groups. Global and regional thematic studies have also been conducted on educational issues of global concern, such as literacy and non-formal learning, and surveys on the conditions of teaching and learning. Results are being reported to regional meetings.

Information and suggestions gathered through the EFA 2000 Assessment will then be used in drafting a new Framework for Action laying out a new set of priorities for global attention at Dakar. Countries will not be asked to change the Declaration, only to enter into a new global compact and action plan to ensure that its goals are actually accomplished and its commitments met.

Final determination of global priorities will await the regional meetings and special studies. In the meantime, however, a global campaign and action plan is proposed to raise awareness of the need for renewed and sustained political commitments for basic education for all. Global action should be planned within the overall framework of anti-

poverty strategies and build explicitly on the results of the country assessments, with ongoing support of accurate and credible statistical indicators. A central component of the global compact must be the focus on subregions with special problems, such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dakar Framework for Action

The Framework represents a bottom-up process, resting as it does on the outcomes of the new assessment. Its purpose is to guide, empower and enable national leaders, working through partnerships at the local through global levels, to meet basic learning needs of all by 2015. The Framework will reaffirm existing international promises contained in the Jomtien Declaration, and its fundamental message can be simply stated: *Maintain the vision; keep the commitments*.

The Jomtien Framework urged countries to set time-bound intermediate targets for meeting the basic learning needs of all children, young people and adults. The proposed Dakar Framework expands on themes of the Jomtien Declaration and proposes five operational goals as well as five strategic objectives designed to meet these goals.
Global targets are offered for the operational goals.

Six major principles underlie the content of the Framework:

- An uncompromising commitment by governments, civil society and the international community to including all who are discriminatorily excluded as full participants in high quality comprehensive basic learning processes.
- Recognition of the need for a beneficial learning climate for the "whole child."
- Stimulating more effective links between new technologies and basic learning.
- Concrete goal-setting and explicit targets for achievement at national and local levels that reflect internationally established criteria.
- A more prominent role for and engagement with civil society.
- Better collaboration, information sharing, transparency and accountability on the part of all actors.

Operational Goals

The five proposed operational goals and accompanying targets are:

Expanded early childhood care and education – Research worldwide has established the value of programs that ensure that young children are physically

and mentally healthy, emotionally secure and intellectually able to learn. Target: *Early childhood care and education opportunities available to all children,from newborn to school entry, by 2015.*

Universal free primary education – Since basic education is integral to eliminating poverty, universal and free access must be assured to all children, especially those who belong to excluded groups. Target: *Universal, equitable access to, and completion of, basic education for all by 2015.*

Meeting basic learning needs of youth and adults – Basic learning skills and competencies are the prerequisite for young people and adults alike to develop their full capacities, to work, to make informed decisions and to continue learning. Target: *Universal, equitable access to basic learning and life skills programs for all young people and adults, by 2015.*

Quality/achievement – Attendance in school is not an end in itseif. Improvements in learning must occur such that an agreed percentage of appropriate age cohorts, or other defined learner group, attains or surpasses nationally defined and objectively measured levels of achievement that are useful to both learners and society. Target: *Measurable improvement attained in educational quality and the assessment of teaching and learning, by 2015.*

Elimination of gender disparities – Gender discrimination of all kinds must be eliminated in the nature of classrooms, schools and education systems. Target: *Gender parity, at least through age 15, in basic education programs (access and completion) by 2015.*

Strategic Objectives

The five proposed strategic objectives are:

Enhanced national investment and effective resource mobilization – Progress in meeting the basic learning needs of all will depend ultimately on the actions taken within individual countries consistent with their special circumstances. Technologies must be harnessed, managerial capacities enhanced, partnerships strengthened and necessary resources made available for teachers to do their job.

A "new space" for communities and civil society – A new political and social "space" must be created to engage learners themselves, civil society, parents and communities in sustained dialogue, decision-making and innovation around basic learning. Building bridges with other basic social services and better articulation with other institutions such as universities and research institutes will be important aspects of this space.

Linking basic education to anti-poverty strategies – Since education is one of the most effective tools for ending poverty, especially among women, national anti-poverty strategies must be explicitly woven into education policies and vice-versa.

Harnessing new technologies – Swiftly changing information and communications technologies must be harnessed to meet basic learning needs as well as to reduce, not exacerbate, economic disparities related to geographical location and other causes. Each country should determine a periodic process of re-evaluation of the availability, suitability and utility of these technologies for all aspects of basic learning

Enabling teachers – Teachers must be acknowledged and supported more practically and technically in their work. Compensation, training and other human resource strategies should be routinely assessed, and threats to teachers' sustained contribution, such as gender discrimination and irregular or inadequate pay, must be openly identified and remedied.

Resource mobilization

Because adequate resources are necessary conditions for effective basic education systems to do their job, resource mobilization must be a central element in any collaborative approach to EFA.

Previous targets have not been met either because insufficient resources have been committed or because existing resources have not been used well. The UN target of 0.7 percent of GNP for aid allocation has not been adhered to, and aid flows have steadily fallen. Assistance from 21 DAC member countries to least developed countries fell from 28 to 23 percent of total aid between 1987 and 1997. Estimates are that a global financing deficit now exists of about US$8 billion per year between current education spending and resources required to achieve universal primary education.

While not the only answer, increased financial resources are essential to rapid achievement of the goals and targets outlined in this Framework. The proposed Dakar Framework therefore reiterates the need for meeting existing commitments to the already agreed 0.7 percent target for development aid. It asks governments to link debt relief and anti-poverty strategies and to ensure that overall national fiscal targets reflect requirements for achieving the 2015 goals for basic education. Resource commitments on the part of international agencies as well as national governments must be clearly specified and adhered to.

Conclusion

The message of Jomtien remains even more vibrant and relevant today than it was a decade ago. Effective basic education policies are the foundation of all sustainable development, and they must be given the human, financial, technical and other resources they require and deserve.

As we enter a new century and a new millenium we stand at a watershed. Dakar offers the opportunity to renew national and global commitments to the goal of universal basic education and to adapt strategies suitable to the new age. The opportunities are immense – and so, too, would be the costs of failure.

The documents and commitments that emerged from Jomtien shine like beacons that illuminate the landscape of global development. They must be reaffirmed, strengthened and given new impetus in order to achieve the all-important goal of Education for All.

Annex II

What is needed to reach the education goals of 2015: the perspective of UNICEF

The world has made progress in reaching the education goals set for the 1990s: universal enrolment in, and 80% completion of, basic education by the year 2000. In some countries, much progress has been achieved. But this is not enough. Hundreds of millions of school-aged children remain out of school or have never completed a basic education, and in many parts of the world, especially among the least developed countries, enrolment and completion rates have gone down in the last decade,

To achieve the education goals of 2015, therefore, much more must be done. The most important is for all nations of the world to carry out the commitment they accepted when they ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child: to **ensure the right of ALL children to a basic education of decent quality**. For many reasons, the world community must insist on the fulfillment of this right:

- for the sake of children themselves;
- to promote development and combat social and economic inequality and injustice;
- as an important part of the solution to many of the world's complex, unsolved social and economic problems (e.g., the intergenerational transmission of poverty, civil violence and war, the devaluing of girls and women, child labour, HIV/AIDS);
- as a way to re-establish stability and a sense of normalcy in systems destabilised by financial, political, natural or social crisis.

In order to fulfill and sustain this commitment, the world must **provide the will and the resources** which are desperately needed for basic education. Estimates indicate that $8 billion a year over ten years could fill many of the resource needs. Such funds could be found in the budgets of many governments and development agencies, as well as in the private sector, if greater priority were placed on basic education -- rather, for example, than on arms or on heavily subsidized programmes that only benefit the few.

Commitment and resources are essential conditions – but they are not sufficient. Policies and programmes, based on the experience of the last decade and arising from the context of individual nations and communities, must also be put in place to ensure that children enter basic education programmes and successfully complete them.

Expand early childhood care and development – ensuring that young children, from birth, receive the comprehensive care they require – for their survival, growth, and development. Such programmes, centred on the child, focused on the home, based in the community, and supported by national policies and budgets, can do much to prepare children for enrolling and staying in school.

Guarantee girls' education -- ensuring full and equal access to, and achievement in, education for girls and eliminating all forms of gender discrimination in classrooms, schools, and systems. We know much more now about how to educate girls, about how to build consensus and partnerships at all levels of society in support of girls' education, and about how focused interventions can make a difference in educational access and quality for girls. When quality improve, both girls and boys benefit. Specific actions, to be developed further through the UNDG initiative on girls' education, include eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination in the teaching and learning process, mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the education system, and socializing girls and boys in a culture of peace and respect for each other's inherent dignity and equality,

Include the excluded -- ensuring that **all** children from primary school entry age to 15 (the ILO minimum age of work) have access to and complete basic education. Governments, communities, and schools must spend greater effort and resources identifying children not in school, including working children, children of ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, and children affected by violence, emergencies, and HIV/AIDS. They must then develop the diverse and flexible programmes needed to ensure the right of these vulnerable children to basic education.

Improve the quality of education through rights-based, child-friendly systems and schools – ensuring that all schools are healthy for children, effective with children, and protective of children, with strong partnerships with communities, parents, and children. Developing such schools implies the need to promote a broader definition of quality that focuses on the quality of educational outcomes -- what children actually learn – and includes:

- quality of learners (health and nutrition status of children and readiness for school))
- quality of content, especially in areas such as literacy, numeracy, and life skills (curricula, achievement assessment, and learning materials)
- quality of the learning process (teachers and their training and the use of new technologies to reduce disparities and enhance learning)
- quality of the learning environment (child-centred and gender-sensitive; with adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities, needed health and nutrition services, and policies which promote a healthy, safe, and secure place for learning)

Finally, children and schools must be seen in the wider context in which they exist. The nature of early childhood care and of children's health and nutrition; the risks faced by children, especially adolescent girls; the impact of HIV/AIDS; more frequent conditions of violence and instability; the lack of employment opportunities after school - all of these require more attention from educators and education systems. They must therefore more clearly **understand the conditions of children and their families and enlist the support of other sectors and actors** (health, nutrition, labour, social welfare; civil society and the private sector), not only to make basic education more accessible but also to make both children more ready for school and schools more ready for children.

But the children of the world should not need to wait until 2015 to fulfill their right to a basic education of good quality. In every nation, using every possible means, with greater political will, more resources, and more appropriate policies, progress towards these goals can – and must -- be accelerated.